Minutes: Iowa Council for Early ACCESS

Date, time, and

place

Date: January 15, 2010 Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Place: Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, Iowa

Attendance

Present: Michael Acarregui, Gladys Alvarez, Jeff Anderson (for DHS), Jodi Angus, Tammy O'Hollearn (for Jane Borst), Mike Bergan, Gina Greene, Angela Hance, Julie Hahn, Kelly Hancock, Brad Kollars, Stacy Kramer, Barb Merrill, Rae Miller (for Debra Waldron), Carrie Sodders, Beth Troutman, and Nansi Woods

Staff: Julie Curry, Marion Kresse, Meghan Wolfe

Excused: Margaret Baker, Jane Borst, Mary Jane Brotherson, Angela Burke Boston, Sara Freiberg, Andrew Hall, Heather Moorman, LauraBelle Sherman-Proehl, Ron Koch, Jo Ann Stone, Mary Stevens, La Mark Combs, and Debra Waldron

Guests: Nicki Varble

Call to order

Kelly Hancock called meeting to order, introductions of Council members and guests took place. Established quorum.

Approval of previous minutes

The council reviewed the ICEA minutes from November 20, 2009. *Action.* Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Gladys Alverez and seconded by Barb Merrill. The motion passed.

Family Story

Nicki Varble

Nicki began her presentation by describing the early warning signs of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). They include not seeing gestures, big smiles or loss of previous abilities. When her son was born he seemed to be developing like most other children. She contacted Early ACCESS because Billy was not talking by the time he was 30 months old. The initial service Early ACCESS provided was speech therapy.

She also voiced her concerns to Billy's doctor. The doctor said to ignore his hitting behavior and test him later if it persists. The speech therapist offered to have Billy evaluated by Early ACCESS. He was diagnosed by a physician as having ASD. His mom embarked on a mission to learn all she could about ASD. Her searching lead to a doctor who specialized in nutritional disorders related to ASD.

Billy was found to have a number of severe allergies and food intolerances. Since taking all gluten out of his diet and making some other dietary changes there has been a dramatic improvement in his behavior. Billy was eligible for Special Education and Early ACCESS helped the family make a smooth transition at age three. She ended by reminding everyone that their family's story is one of hope.

Lead agency and signatory updates

Kelly Hancock

Kelly reviewed the topics discussed at the Executive committee meeting.

- CHSC participated in a Premature Infant Care Stakeholders Meeting and will provide future updates if any changes in procedures are recommended.
- The Lead Agency reviewed ARRA funding recommendations.
- CHSC is working with the U of I to resolve how confidential health records can be shared with Early ACCESS.
- A Lead Agency staff member provided an update on Medicaid issues.
- State staff discussed how Service Coordination priorities identified by the ICEA were being enacted through the MOA action plan.
- Plans for the next ICEA and Executive Committee meetings were developed.

Overview of national and state legislation

Carrie Fitzgerald

Ms. Fitzgerald works for the Child and Family Policy Center; she specializes on health care issues. She noted that the Congressional Health Care Reform bill contains many items that could have a positive impact on early childhood services. She pointed out that continued funding of the CHIP program (HAWK-I program in Iowa) is important to maintaining Iowa's high rate of insuring children. Expanded mental health coverage for children below the age of five is also being considered. She noted that the House and Senate bills are different and advocates are urging representatives to take the best features from both bills.

At the state level the budget shortfall is the key issue. Rather than ask for new funding the focus has been on preserving what is currently in place. She did note that there is a study bill that is looking at requiring insurance companies to pay for hearing aids. Another important issue being considered is payment for cognitive testing. Families often have to pay for testing if they want their child to qualify for adult services after age 18.

Annual Progress Report, Indicators C3

Julie Curry

Early Childhood Outcome data from 2008-2009 were presented to the Council. The results were compared to prior years. Following the presentation the Council members discussed the targets set for this indicator.

Action. Michael Bergan moved and Gladys Alverez seconded maintaining the targets set at the November ICEA meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Constituency and advocacy roles of ICEA members

Julie Curry

Council members reviewed their roles in representing a constituency group and that of advising and assisting the Lead Agency. Examples were given on how these roles contrast with that of an advocate. Members discussed the different roles they perform in both small and large groups. The take-away message was that educational activities are permitted while acting as ICEA representatives, but lobbying for the passage of specific state or federal legislation is not.

Committee reports

Each Committee Chair reported:

- Public Policy Committee: Members volunteered to attend "Day on the Hill," an opportunity to meet with State Representatives and Senators at the capitol on February third. In the morning there will be a training session sponsored by Early Childhood Iowa at the Botanical Center.
- By Laws Committee: The committee recommended combining the Membership and Nominating committees and to use consistent fonts and numbering throughout the document. State staff will send out the revised bylaws 30 days prior to the next ICEA meeting.
- Parent Committee: Deb Samson, coordinator of the Parent Educator
 Connection program, spoke to the committee prior to the regular meeting. She
 described her experiences raising a child with a disability and answered
 questions about balancing her family's needs with her role as an advocate.
- Nominating and Membership Committee: The committee discussed the status
 of members who have not attended three successive meetings. The
 Membership Committee Chair will contact the members. The committee
 identified vacancies that will need to be filled for the next fiscal year.
- Governor's Report: The committee reviewed edits to the current report and made additional changes. State staff will revise the report and send it to the committee for final approval for printing prior to Day on the Hill.

Sharing

- Stacy Kramer described the high points of her trip to the OSEP Conference. It was a great opportunity to hear from other parents.
- Julie Curry also attended OSEP; she said a number of states are worried that if they do not maintain the state's share of early childhood funding states may have to withdraw from IDEA Part C.
- Gina Green encouraged members to watch a documentary called "Raising Samuel" by Dan Habib.
- Gladys Alverez said there is a free Mental Health Conference in Omaha, NE on March 1st and 2nd. State staff will send out details.
- Mike Acarregui noted that there is a Perinatal Conference in Sioux City on January 20th and in Des Moines on April 28th.

Adjournment 3:15 PM

Kelly Hancock noted that the next meeting will be on March 5th. Motion to adjourn by Gladys Alvarez, second by Jodi Angus. Motion carried.